



Childhood Connections

March 5, 2024

Roads to Success

Throughout 2024, the Office of Childhood (OOC) will share “Roads to Success,” a collection of stories from professionals and higher education institutions. Stories from professionals feature achievements from people working in childhood programs such as home visiting, early intervention, child care, Head Start, preschool, and afterschool. Stories from higher education institutions highlight colleges and universities who are using innovative methods to support and grow the early childhood workforce. There are many roads to success, it is important to highlight the varying and unique pathways that professionals take and how higher education programs can pave the way. These stories are also available at the bottom of the [Early Connections website](#).



This month's Road to Success story spotlights the University of Central Missouri's Early Childhood Education program (UCM ECE). Currently, UCM's College of Education and ECE program offer a variety of degree pathways.

For individuals seeking undergraduate coursework in early childhood education, UCM ECE offers a bachelor's degree in early childhood education with teacher certification. There are several other options for undergraduates, such as adding an early childhood special education minor or completing undergraduate certificates.

UCM ECE also offers an undergraduate program to support completion of a bachelor's degree in early childhood education in 18 months (or less) if the individual already has a bachelor's degree in another field. For example, qualifying candidates can earn college credit for current work experience. This applies to paraprofessionals currently working in early childhood education classrooms and seeking teacher certification.

UCM ECE's fully online graduate degree program offers a 30-credit hour Master of Science in Early Childhood Education and two 15 credit hour graduate certificates. UCM ECE partners with Child Care Aware® of Missouri to offer a specialized MSE certificate in Leadership and Management in Early Childhood Education through T.E.A.C.H. MISSOURI scholarships for early childhood educators in child care settings.

UCM is an important partner in strengthening the early childhood workforce in Missouri and participates in the OOC workforce development project.

OPEN! 2024 Market Rate Survey (MRS)

Every three years the state conducts a MRS to collect information on the current rates Missouri child care providers charge for child care services. This survey will also collect information about the actual cost of providing child care.

Last month, OOC sent all licensed and license-exempt providers a link to this survey. The deadline to complete the survey is **March 31, 2024**.

Child care providers needing assistance with the survey can contact PCG, the contractor helping OOC with this survey, at MOMRS24@pcgus.com or call 888-316-7169.

NEW! Preschool Start-Up Resources

Two new documents have been added to the [Preschool Start Up & Guidance](#) webpage that may be helpful for school districts making plans for next school year's prekindergarten (Pre-K) programs for children attending the year before they are eligible for kindergarten. These documents can also help school districts looking at starting up a new Pre-K program.



REMINDER! Early Childhood State Advisory Council Meeting

The next meeting of the Early Childhood State Advisory Council (ECSAC) will be held virtually on **Monday, April 15, 2024, at 12:30 p.m.**

The agenda and related presentation materials will be posted on the [ECSAC meeting webpage](#) approximately one week before the meeting.

UPDATE! Office of Childhood Contact Information

The [Funding Considerations document](#) was created in partnership between the OOC and Aligned Inc. The document is specifically for Local Education Agencies (LEAs) and walks through potential scenarios that could be used to structure a Pre-K program in a school district. This document provides an overview of frameworks LEAs can use to provide Pre-K programs, including through contracted partnerships with community programs.

Also, the [Preschool Funding Map](#) gives a high level overview of each type of funding available to preschool programs serving children age 3 to 5 years old. There are several diverse ways that preschool programs can be funded, document serves as a quick reference guide to what each type of funding requires and how they can be paired together to support a program.

These documents and other helpful information is available on the [Start-up & Guidance webpage](#).

REGISTER NOW! 2024 MO-SECA Training Opportunities

Missouri Supporting Early Childhood Administrators (MO-SECA) provides thousands of early childhood administrators across the state with knowledge, skills, and connections they need to effectively lead and operate sustainable, quality programs.

MO-SECA provides no-cost training, tools, and one-on-one coaching to help child care administrators effectively manage their business operations. Business training curriculum includes fiscal management, record keeping, QuickBooks for child care businesses, risk management, supervision, human resources, and strategic communications to name a few.

- Recipients will receive a stipend for participation, clock hours for state licensure, free resources, subscriptions, and more!
- The MO-SECA program is open to child care administrators in licensed programs.

Sign up today at [MO-SECA.com](https://moseca.com). For questions about registration, email contactmoseca@gmail.com or call 314-558-6966.

NEW! Upcoming National Early Childhood Conferences

OOC publishes a printable [Contact Us](#) document that includes the phone numbers and email addresses for every program administered by OOC.

There is also an accompanying [What We Do webpage](#) that lists the section and team leaders for each OOC program.

Both of these pages remain updated with current contact information.

NEW! First Steps Family Engagement Opportunities

The [First Steps parent page](#) has been updated with several opportunities for families to get involved in state and regional program improvement activities.

Learn more about how to get involved with state initiatives such as family outcomes, childhood outcomes, and other topics of interest to First Steps families by joining the Family Stakeholder Group.

The [First Steps Parent Information flyer](#) has more information for those who are interested.

NEW! Parent Leadership Report

In 2023, the OOC partnered with the University of Missouri-Columbia, Center for Excellence in Child

Several national early childhood conferences are approaching for 2024. The following list of conferences are geared towards early childhood professionals.

- [International Early Childhood Inclusion Institute](#)
 - May 7-9, Chapel Hill, NC and virtual
 - *All Means All: Embracing Disability and Intersectionality*
- [Division of Early Childhood \(DEC's\) 39th Annual International Conference on Young Children with Special Needs and Their Families](#)
 - September 17-20 New Orleans, LA
 - *The Future of Inclusive Practices in Early Childhood (Ages 0-8): Equitable Access, Participation, and Supports*
- [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#)
 - November 6-9, Anaheim, CA

NEW! Afterschool Grant Writing Workshop

Are you looking to start an afterschool program that provides a safe and supportive environment for children and youth? DESE receives the following funding for Afterschool programs, which are made available through a competitive grant process: Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC). This grant supports those who are considering starting an afterschool program in their community that supports social, emotional, cognitive, and academic development; reduces risky behaviors, promotes physical health.

A grant-writing workshop will be held on **March 29, 2024**, providing information about applying for the grant. For more workshop information and to register for the event, visit the [Registration](#) webpage.

For more information about Afterschool programs visit the [Afterschool Programs](#) webpage or contact Afterschool@dese.mo.gov.

NEW! Promotional Items for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library

Wellbeing to facilitate parent leadership activities including Regional Parent Advisory Councils, a Statewide Parent Advisory Council, and Parent Café Trainings.

The 2023 Parent Leadership Report summarizes the activities and feedback received from parents during the parent advisory council meetings.

Check out the new [2023 Parent Leadership Report](#).

NEW! 2024 Conscious Discipline Training Opportunities

Conscious Discipline trainings will continue this year for home visitors and child care providers.

Conscious Discipline for Home Visitors:

- Tuesday, March 26, 2024, from 9 am to noon.

[Fill out the interest form at The Center for Excellence in Child Well-Being webpage](#) to register to have a training scheduled in your area.

NEW! Quality Assurance Report (QAR) Flyer

The QAR recognizes early care and education programs that



New promotional items for Dolly Parton's Imagination Library are now available! These items include a postcard with say Quick Response (QR) code and a Spanish version of the informational flyer with QR code. These, along with the English version of the informational Flyer with QR Code and other approved promotional materials can be used to help encourage families to sign up for the Imagination Library. [View these items on our Dolly Parton's Imagination Library webpage.](#)

Packets with these items will be mailed to all school districts and Head Start Programs between March 4 and March 11, 2024, to be shared with families during their spring preschool screening activities.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is available in every zip code in Missouri. Children birth to age 5 years old can be registered by their parent or guardian to receive one free book per month. There is no cost to families and there is no limit on how many children in Missouri can sign up.

Visit www.imaginationlibrary.com under "Check Availability" to complete the registration form.

REMINDER! Child Care Data System (CCDS)

OOC has been sending letters and emails to parents receiving child care assistance to help them get connected to the new child care data system (CCDS) before they need to renew their subsidy. The messages include information based on when the parent entered the subsidy program:

- **Existing Families.** For families in child care who were receiving subsidy in December 2023 or earlier in 2023, [this flyer for Existing](#)

demonstrate quality practices.

Participants receive, Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS)© assessments, one on one coaching, access to quality supports and resources, and a fully funded training opportunity for staff who are interested in obtaining a Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential.

View [the informational flyer](#) to learn more about the program and register for the QAR program.

NEW! Accomplishments Page

Each year the OOC highlights the biggest accomplishments from the office. Recently, the Early Connections website was updated with the office accomplishments to date. These informational flyers highlight achievements from each section within the office.

[Visit the Office of Childhood Accomplishments webpage.](#)

UPDATE! Free Parent Webinar

Join medical editor and host Dr. Jennifer Shu and guest expert Patti Ideran on March 22, 2024, for a discussion about the

[Families](#) can help them connect to their historical information in CCDS.

- **New Families.** For families in child care who applied and were determined eligible for child care subsidies after January 1, 2024, [this flyer for New Families](#) can help them create a new account in CCDS.

If the family is eligible for child care assistance but has not selected their child care provider, these two resources may be helpful:

- **Find a Provider.** For help finding a child care provider, visit the [Resource & Referral website](#). Parents can also email programresources@united4children.org or call 866-583-2392, extension 1 for assistance.
- **Select a Provider in CCDS.** Use this quick steps document to [select or change a child care provider](#) in CCDS.

About half of the parents participating in the subsidy program still need to connect their account in the new system – please help us spread the word to families in your community!

amazing benefits of baby massage.

Learn practical massage techniques, including the CALM touch strategy, to ease tension, enhance flexibility, and create lasting bonds with your little one.

[Visit the parent webinar page to register now.](#)

REMINDER! Retention of Child Care Staff and Enhancement Grants

Two relief grants are available to child care providers in Missouri:

- Retention grants support child care staff members. [Apply here!](#) Application closes **March 31, 2024.**
- Enhancement grants support child care programs. [Apply here!](#) Application closes **May 31, 2024.**

Contact ChildCareRelief@dese.mo.gov or call 573-415-8951, extension 1, if you have questions about your application or payment.

REMINDER! Healthy Habits to Help Protect Against the Flu

The single best way to reduce the risk of seasonal flu and its potentially serious complications is to get

vaccinated each year, but good health habits like avoiding people who are sick, covering your cough, and washing your hands help stop the spread of germs and prevent respiratory illnesses like the flu.

[Visit the Healthy Habits to Help Protect Against the Flu at the CDC's webpage](#) to learn more prevention tips.

REMINDER! Ratio and Group Size Requirements

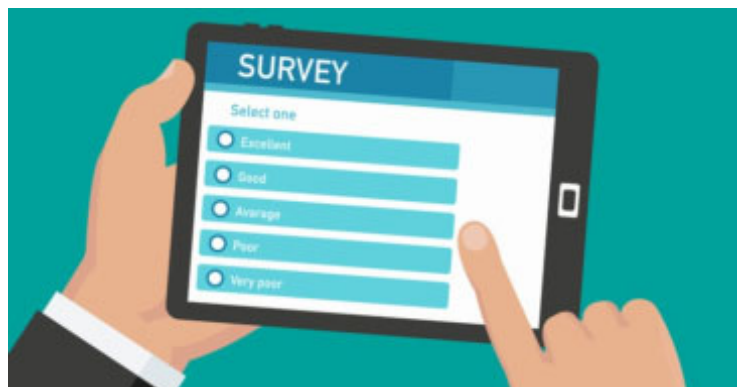
For Group Child Care Homes Group Child Care Homes fall under the ratio and group size requirements identified in the Licensing Rules for Group Child Care Homes and Child Care Centers.

An exception to the rules outlined in 5 CSR 25-500.112 (1) (B) allow Group Child Care Homes that are licensed for no more than four children under the age of 2 to combine multiple groups within the same physical space. However, ratios must still be maintained.

OPEN! 2024 OOC Annual Stakeholder Survey

As an important stakeholder in Missouri's Early Care and Education system, your feedback helps guide the state's improvement activities. Your feedback assists in evaluating the outcomes of the Preschool Development Birth to Five grant, as well as progress on the strategic plan for Missouri's childhood system.

[This five-minute survey](#) asks questions about the Early Care and Education system in Missouri. Hurry! The deadline to complete the survey is **March 26, 2024**.



REMINDER! MOPD System Requires Two- Factor Authentication

Two-factor authentication (2FA) is now required for logging into the [MOPD system](#).

2FA is a security measure that adds an extra layer of protection when accessing important accounts or services electronically. Users who previously experienced an error with the verification code should try again as all issues have been resolved.

See full instructions for 'Two-Factor Authentication' at [MOPD User Instructions](#).

For questions, contact MOPD@dese.mo.gov or call 573-526-8273.

REMINDER! MOPD System - Tips for Trainers

DESE's training approval process is accessed through the Missouri Professional Development (MOPD) System and trainers use the MOPD System to award attendance for courses they host. The MOPD system website has a [video for trainers](#) and a [trainer section](#) with step by step details on making courses, events, and adding attendance. There are also important notes for trainers [in the resources section of the MOPD website](#). Refer to DESE's webpage for [information about what will count for clock hour credit](#).

Here are some helpful tips:

- Trainers must submit a course application for approval. DESE cannot see the course if it is in 'In Process' status. DESE strives to review courses within 30 days of submission.
- There are multiple ways to add attendance after hosting the training event. Trainers may choose to use the MOPD app, add each person's MOPDID individually, or upload an Excel file list of those attending. A paper sign-in sheet should also be taken at the training but is not required to be uploaded.
- Before completing the event, the trainer should ensure attendees uploaded correctly and they issued attendance accurately. Trainers are responsible for updating information if an attendee's name is misspelled or their MOPDID is incorrect.
- Do not complete the event until all attendees are accurately added to the roster.
- It is best practice to list a backup trainer for all events in the case of trainer's illness, emergency, or position change.
- CPR/First Aid trainers have [separate instructions](#) for meeting additional requirements.
- Coming soon! Events will automatically complete or cancel within 30 days of the event date. Trainers will not be able to make updates to the roster after 30 days.

Training organizations that host online on-demand/asynchronous course(s), must have DESE approval prior to offering the course(s). Asynchronous events last for 12 months and should be scheduled January-December each year.

More details are found in the trainer section of the [MOPD System written instructions](#). Contact MOPD@dese.mo.gov to learn more.

Spotlight on Success

Spotlight on Success aims to share stories from local programs that are building community partnerships in order to strengthen and coordinate childhood programs.



Photo Courtesy of Lauren Bauer – CYSHCN Service Coordinator

Childhood Community Leaders in the Southwest Region are excited to have service coordinators of the Children and Youth with Special Needs (CYSHCN) programs engaged as stakeholders.

The CYSHCN Program is a part of Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services and provides assistance for children and youth with special health care needs from birth to age 21. The program focuses on early identification and service coordination for children and youth who meet medical eligibility guidelines. As payer of last resort, the CYSHCN Program provides limited funding for medically necessary diagnostic and treatment services for individuals whose families also meet financial eligibility guidelines. These services and supplies include but are not limited to: doctor visits, emergency care, inpatient hospitalization, outpatient surgery, prescription medication, diagnostic testing, orthodontia and prosthodontia (cleft lip/palate only), therapy (physical, occupational, speech and respiratory), durable medical equipment, orthotics, hearing aids, specialized formula, and incontinence supplies.

After hearing Lauren Bauer, the Region 3 CYSHCN Service Coordinator, speak at a childhood community leader stakeholder meeting, area home visiting programs invited her to speak again to their home visitors. She also connected with First Steps providers in the Southwestern counties of the state. After

speaking and connecting with all three of these groups, Lauren created informational packets to hand out to families and through this work, was invited to participate in the Community Baby Shower that the community leaders hosted last year.

Both the childhood community leaders and CYSHCN are excited about this collaboration and the opportunity to build relationships that allow different organizations to work together toward a goal of serving their communities.

UPDATE! Preschool Development Grant



The Preschool Development Grant Birth to Five (PDG B-5) provides funding over three years to coordinate a more effective, high-quality early childhood system that better prepares Missouri children for success.

Each month, the OOC hosts a live webinar to provide updates and information about the PDG B-5 to stakeholders. A [recording](#) and the [PowerPoint slides](#) from the February 2024 webinar are available in case you were unable to attend and wish to hear the information. You can view archived webinars here:

- [January 2024](#)
- [November 2023](#)
- [October 2023](#)
- [September 2023](#)
- [August 2023](#)
- [July 2023](#)

The [PDG B-5 dashboard](#) is also updated monthly. This dashboard provides an at-a-glance look at priority areas, budget status, and key accomplishments.

PDG B-5 Monthly Webinar

Join us for the next PDG B-5 Stakeholder webinar on **Tuesday, March 26, 2024**, from noon to 12:45 p.m. to learn more and ask questions. You can [access the webinar](#) in a Google Chrome or Safari web browser. Do not view in Internet Explorer. We hope you can participate!

For questions about the stakeholder webinar series, or suggestions for topics in future webinars, email us at Childhood@dese.mo.gov.

Archived Editions of Childhood Connections

[Visit the OOC webpage to find previous editions of Childhood Connections.](#)

disabilities may be directed to the Jefferson State Office Building, Director of Civil Rights Compliance and MOA Coordinator (Title VI/Title VII/Title IX/504/ADA/ADAAA/Age Act/GINA/USDA Title VI), 5th Floor, 205 Jefferson Street, P.O. Box 480, Jefferson City, MO 65102-0480; telephone number 573-526-4757 or TTY 800-735-2966; email civilrights@dese.mo.gov.



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